Max Kaufman

In 1919, the 18th amendment was ratified and the sale of alcohol was illegal. Although it was against the law, this didn’t stop people from going to illegal bars, or speakeasies, to drink alcohol. Speakeasies were usually open very late at night and people needed code words to come in. There were thought to be 100,000 speakeasies in New York City. Speakeasies owners paid the policemen off not to arrest them and raid their establishments. In New York City’s “21 Club,” a famous Speakeasy, they didn’t pay off the police, but they installed 4 alarm buttons in the vestibule alone, and there were 5 secret caches where they hid the liquor. The caches were accessible through secret doors that were short circuited whenever an alarm button was pressed. Average people became criminals transporting and selling liquor. People came up with elaborate ways to transport liquor. People used coconut shells, false books, garden hoses, and water bottles to transport liquor. One man was found carrying two boxes of eggs, the insides drained out and liquor put inside the shells.

"Speakeasies." *www.alliance.ed.uiuc.edu*. N.p., 1998. Web. 9 Mar 2011. <http://alliance.ed.uiuc.edu/cdrom/hononegah/prohibition/speakeasies-s.htm>.